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CANADA'S
THANKSGIVING

FOR

NATIONAL BLESSINGS

IN

The Year of Our Lord, 1865.

THE SUBSTANCE OF A SERMON

BY THE

REV. JOHN JENKINS, D.D.

MONTREAL:

DAWSON BROTHERS, 20 GREAT ST. JAMES STREET.

1865.



PROCLAMATION.

PROVINCE OF }
CANADA. }

MONCK.

VICTORIA, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, QUEEN, Defender of the Faith, &c., &c., &c.,
To all Our Loving Subjects in Our Province of Canada—GREETING:

PROCLAMATION.

GEO. ET. CARTIER, *Atty. Genl.*, **K**NOW YE that, taking into consideration the duty which Our loving Subjects of Our Province of Canada, owe to Almighty God for the manifold Blessings which they have received at His Hands, and especially for the abundant Harvest, with which he has blessed Our said Province during the present year, We HAVE THOUGHT FIT, by the advice of Our Executive Council for Our said Province, to appoint, and We do, by this Our Royal Proclamation, appoint Wednesday, the Eighteenth day of October next, as a day of General Thanksgiving to Almighty God for these His Mercies; AND WE DO EARNESTLY EXHORT all Our loving Subjects in Our said Province to observe reverentially and devoutly the said day of Thanksgiving.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, We have caused these Our Letters to be made Patent, and the Great Seal of Our said Province of Canada to be hereunto affixed; WITNESS, Our Right Trusty and Well-Beloved Cousin the Right Honorable CHARLES STANLEY VISCOUNT MONCK, Baron Monck of Ballytramon, in the County of Wexford, Governor General of British North America, and Captain General and Governor in Chief in and over Our Provinces of Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Island of Prince Edward, and Vice Admiral of the same, &c., &c., &c. At Our Government House, in our city of Quebec, in Our said Province of Canada, this fifteenth day of September, in the year of Our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-five, and in the Twenty-ninth year of Our Reign.

By Command,

WM. McDUGALL, *Secretary.*

M. LONGMOORE & CO., PRINTERS.

NOTE.

In deference to the judgment and wish of the Congregation who listened to it, the following Discourse is given to the Public.

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH,

Montreal, 18th October, 1865.



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SERMON.

Psalm cxi; 1—5.

“PRAISE YE THE LORD. I will praise the LORD with *my* whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and *in* the congregation.

“The works of the LORD *are* great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

“His work *is* honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever.

“He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion.

“He hath given meat unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant.”

To recognize the hand of God in the reception of national blessings, must ever be esteemed right in a Christian people.

Those who accept the Bible narrative as a faithful record (so far as it goes) of the events which took place in the history of the leading ancient nations, find no difficulty in believing that national forgetfulness of God led to national degradation; and that, forasmuch as the laws of Providence, in the government as well of nations as of persons, are invariable, similar causes will in later times produce like effects.

Not that it can ever be wrong to consider those causes of a nation's prosperity or adversity which are

immediate and apparent, those which we have been wont to denominate "*second* causes." The teaching of the Bible respecting this subject is in harmony with the dictates of common sense. Sanitary regulations are essential to the health of a people; commerce cannot be conducted to permanent success save on the basis of a sound political economy; thrift can alone make a people prosperous and rich. You call that man an enthusiast who sits down in idleness and expects his farm to bring forth, without the labour of ploughing and planting, of harrowing and hoeing. But, as the most laborious and accomplished husbandman would be guilty of folly were he to forget Him on whom he is dependent for the refreshing showers and the warm sunshine without which the most earnest and scientific cultivation would be vain,—so the people who, without a thought of the Author of all good, should depend wholly upon cleanliness for health, and upon sound laws for commercial prosperity, and upon carefulness and thrift for general plenty, would be alike guilty of folly. Granted that man, whether individual or social, is to plan and work as though every thing depended upon himself; but he is also to trust the power and bounty of a higher than himself, even that Providence with whom and in whom are the ultimate sources of all the good with which earth teems.

It is the relation of the great Ruler to national prosperity which, by the wise and Christian appointment of the GOVERNOR GENERAL IN COUNCIL, we are this day invited to consider. He calls upon us to acknowledge the hand of God in the good which as a people we enjoy, especially in the overflowing

harvest with which we have just been permitted to fill our garner. Our songs of praise and our acknowledgments in prayer have been already presented to the Giver of all blessings. It behoves us now to consider, in the light of God's Word, the extent, not alone of our mercies, but of our responsibilities also.

1. *I might refer to the natural features of that Country in which the Providence of God has placed us, and which, therefore, He has committed to our keeping.* Of vast territorial extent, its native resources can scarcely be measured even by science, much less by ordinary calculation. Its minerals, its soil, its timber, its very quarries;—its range of climate, greater than a superficial observer would suppose—the almost tropical warmth of its summers compensating, so far as its agricultural and horticultural productions are concerned, for the rigours of its winters;—its highways for commerce, those rivers and inland seas which for amplitude and grandeur are not matched, if indeed they are equalled in any other land;—its scenery grand as at its great Cataract, beautiful as in the midst of its Thousand-Islands on the noble St. Lawrence, brilliant and gorgeous every where when Autumn—matchless painter!—tints with rainbow hues its magnificent foliage—these things show us with a distinctness which makes it indubitable, that we who now inhabit Canada, are laying the foundation of an Empire, destined to be amongst the greatest and most prosperous in all the earth. The trust is great! Will the people be faithful to it? Will they have wisdom to apprehend their responsibility?

Self-denial—PATRIOTISM enough to fulfil it? At least we trace to-day the hand of Infinite Bounty in the material magnificence and resources which pertain to our country. Truly, “the works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.”

2. *I might refer also in proof of the goodness of Providence towards us, to the connexion of Canada with the British Crown.* This is a fit subject for joy and thankfulness on such a day, and on such an occasion. Indeed it could not be overlooked without palpable dereliction of duty, by any Clergyman of any Church in the land, least of all of a Congregation which maintains its connexion with a National Church of the Empire.

The spirit and traditions of the British Constitution have been infused into the thoughts of our people; and whatever we possess of true freedom, of benign legislation, of just laws, of sufficient protection to life and property in this country, we largely owe, under God, to our position in the British Empire. More, whatever of progress in purity, in justice, in moderation, in good government, may have distinguished the British Rule for the last quarter of a century, we owe, under the same God, to that august Woman who now sits upon the throne of Britain and sways its mighty sceptre. We have no quarrel with other systems of government, whether autocratic as in France, or democratic as in the neighboring Republic. These systems may suit well the people of the countries that have flourished under them. But we may be permitted to express our gratitude to God for the good which we detect in

our own Constitution, Government, and Laws; and to express also our preference for those great constitutional principles which have made Britain what she is, and which, if faithfully maintained in her dependencies, will prepare them, each one, for a like elevation in the scale of Nations. And I do think it a fit subject for gratulation to-day, that the feeling of the people of Canada respecting the maintenance of this connexion is so hearty, and, save in a fractional degree, so unanimous. There may be differences of opinion amongst the Queen's subjects in Canada respecting the best mode of perpetuating this connexion. Confederative Union of British North America may have its advocates on the one hand, Legislative Union its adherents on the other; but there are few among us who would not regard that a day of dolefulness and gloom in which the British Flag should cease to wave over the forts and harbours of Canada, a signal of its connexion with and its protection by that Great Power which the Ruler of Nations has advanced to the foremost rank amongst the Empires of the World. This connexion and this protection are benefits not to be lightly esteemed, and not to be hastily surrendered.

3. *Let us not overlook to-day that evidence of the Divine mercy to this Country which we have in the preservation of Peace during the last year.* Every one who now hears me is aware in how critical a position Canada has been placed during the four years' war that has afflicted the neighbouring Republic. The difficulty of maintaining peaceful relations with the United States increased as the war waged; now, by

the feeling which prevailed against the Mother Country; and now, by the fact that this Colony became a refuge for political offenders from the Revolting States; until, within the last twelve months, chiefly through the rashness (to use a mild term) of some who had gained an asylum amongst us, the relations became so delicate as to leave little hope that war could be avoided. We do not overlook the skill and judgment which were shown by our authorities both Imperial and Colonial in managing so intricate and difficult a situation; and, at a suitable time and place, we would not be slow to acknowledge our obligations for the successful manner in which they met the grave emergency. But to-day, we rather trace our deliverance from the danger and fear of war to Him who "maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth," and who holdeth the understandings of Rulers within His own power. To our bountiful God we owe it that our homes are not invaded, that desolation has not blackened our fields, that our fathers and husbands and sons are not struggling in battle, falling dead or wounded before the hand of the foe. To Him we owe it that Commerce has been permitted to pursue its peaceful and prosperous way; that our hearths and altars have not been violated by the sword, or polluted with human blood. Those only know the blessings of peace who have witnessed the violence and desolations of war. And to-day our hearts should send up to Heaven's throne one long, earnest, united "Hosanna" that peace has been maintained; and not alone maintained, but also that there is every hope of its being preserved between the two countries. "Not unto us, O Lord; not unto us; but

unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy and for Thy truth's sake."

4. *Neither must we omit to acknowledge the goodness of God in the season of Health which he has given this Country to enjoy.* Other countries have been sorely afflicted with disease. Egypt, Turkey, France, Italy, Spain, are among those nations which have suffered from dire pestilence. We have been spared this stroke; and, so far as our own city is concerned, have enjoyed health in spite of the most reckless, I will add, *wicked* neglect of sanitary regulations. Great Britain has, at the same time, been visited with a plague which has decimated its horned cattle, and is now embracing its sheep folds. A serious catastrophe for our native land, giving occasion for profound apprehension lest supplies of food for the people should for a great part fail; for milk, butter, cheese, and the flesh of these animals are important articles of food. The seriousness is deepened by the fact that the potato crop in many parts of Great Britain and Ireland has been blighted by that disease which has so often destroyed it within the last twelve or fifteen years. Comparing our own health as a people with these facts in the past year's history of other lands, we may well lift up our hearts in praise to Him "who hath preserved our lives from destruction and crowned us [thus] with loving kindness and tender mercies." "In this,"—may we not say in the words of the text,—“He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered.”

5. There are other grounds for our acknowledgment of the Divine goodness to this country, at which

it is right to glance on a day of National Thanksgiving:

The perpetuity of our Educational Institutions. Considering the newness of Canada, the work of Education has made great progress amongst us; and we cannot be sufficiently thankful that the Government has devoted so much of its thought and care to a work upon the successful prosecution of which depends the present and future well-being of the country. The statistics as to both numbers and advancement of the Common Schools of Western Canada, compare favourably with those of older countries,—of England, of Prussia, and even of New England. Amongst ourselves in the Eastern part of the Province, owing to a difference of religious belief, it is somewhat difficult to establish a uniform and thorough scheme of Common-School Education. Yet, the attempts made in this direction have not been wholly unsuccessful; and imperfect as in many respects the working of the scheme must be, we are not without hope that gradually the majority of the people in Eastern Canada will be roused to consider the immense advantage which would accrue to them were their children submitted to a liberal and thorough Common-School training. In the plan which shall be devised for uniting British North America under one government, it may be hoped that those who are in the minority, holding as they do their Protestant principles dear, viewing these principles as a holy birthright and a sacred trust, as indeed the basis of much of the liberty and freedom and elevation and good order and prosperity that Great Britain has enjoyed since the Reformation, will

be protected in their preferences, and permitted to retain their children under those religious influences which have been so greatly blessed to themselves. Not for a moment would we interfere with the convictions and preferences of our fellow-subjects of another faith. Let them enjoy that liberty in religion which was guaranteed at the conquest. Faithless would Great Britain be, faithless should we also be, were any attempt made to restrain their ecclesiastical freedom. What we ask is that our rights shall not be overlooked, that our children shall not be tampered with. I have no fear for the CITIES, I speak rather of those country parishes in which our Roman Catholic friends are in an overwhelming majority. This point it will be our paramount duty to guard.

Those higher Institutions of learning which have been established amongst us chiefly by private munificence, the prosperity which has attended them, and the character which they have acquired—a character which is acknowledged by the most venerable Institutions in the Mother Country—demand also a grateful reference. These are Institutions on which the better classes amongst us must for the most part depend for the education of their sons, and from which the learned professions must be replenished with members. That we have Universities and Colleges in such numbers and, in general, so efficient, augurs well for the future of the country; because upon the intelligence, earnestness and efficiency of the pulpit, the senate, the bar, the medical profession, and the mercantile profession proper, every nation is largely dependent for its progress in liberty, in

morality, in civilization, in all that constitutes social well-being.

In this connexion, too, let us note the Religious advantages which surround us in this Country. It is much that we enjoy liberty of worshipping God according to our conscientious convictions. Much as we regret the divisions which exist in the Church, it is a source of gratification and thankfulness that the great majority of the pulpits of this land are filled with men who preach the truth. No one can look over the less-settled portions of Canada, and mark the labours of the clergymen and missionaries who are there doing the work of the Church,—these pioneers in Christian enterprise and zeal, toiling in the midst and in spite of poverty, denying themselves that they may elevate the people and benefit their country,—without admiration for the men, and gratitude to God who has raised them up and sent them forth. Thankful, too, ought we to be for the evidences which we have around us in Church extension—of a disposition on the part of our Christian fellow-citizens to provide for the comfort of the several congregations to which they belong, and to meet the growing wants of a rapidly extending city. We are no bigots, we have a liberal heart for all who hold the truth, and in their prosperity and success we rejoice. Sound religion under whatever form held must be a blessing to any country.

6. *But to-day we are especially called upon to recognize the Hand of God in the abundant harvest and consequent prosperity which have just been granted to us.*

I need not explain how largely all the interests of

Canada depend upon the efficiency of its Agricultural productions. Its timber, its minerals, are as nothing compared with its crops. On these we rely for food both for man and beast; and we are not in a position, as are large and older manufacturing countries like France and England, to import cereals for our own consumption. If then, in the Providence of God, there should ever be a total failure of the cereal crops, it would be followed by a condition little short of famine. If this condition were mitigated by a partial crop—just enough for our own consumption—though there would not be famine, the commercial interests of the country would be seriously crippled, and large suffering in the general community, arising from lack of means and labour, would be the result. This you have had to witness and lament for the last two or three years; and few there are among us, who in the spring of 1865, did not give utterance to the opinion that a short crop in Canada this year would be little less than ruin. But God is merciful! He hath not visited us, as He might justly have done, for our sins; and to-day we are permitted to rejoice over a season of plenty, equalling if not surpassing any former season in the history of this country. So that not only have we enough for home consumption, but supplies for other countries. These supplies are freely taken at more than average prices, yielding in our favour a large balance of trade. An impetus is thus given to manufactures and to trade and commerce, yea, to all the material interests of the country. Fittingly might the words of the Psalmist be addressed to us this day: “Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem! Praise thy God, O Zion! For He hath

strengthened the bars of thy gates; He hath blessed thy children within thee. He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat. He hath not dealt so with any nation, and as for His judgments they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord." Or in the language of the text, "He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered. The Lord is gracious and full of compassion. He hath given meat unto them that fear Him. He will ever be mindful of His covenant."

But Gratitude is not a mere sentiment;—of it we may say—what an apostle said of faith—*without works it is dead*. What is sentiment without expression? There is a life—a mode of living and acting which is the true expression of gratitude. The citizen who intelligently recognizes the Hand of God in the communication of national blessings, will live for the true elevation, in righteousness in purity in godliness, of the people whom, on his own theory, Providence has blessed. He will throw his influence into the scale of political truth and honour. For the true advancement of his country he will live. If any of us think that the natural tendency of religion is to lead a man to eschew politics, we are utterly mistaken. A Christian's duty is, in his sphere, to take an interest in all that concerns the well-being of his country—commercially, politically, religiously. Politics is a noble science, and it is a pursuit, too, worthy of the purest man. Religion does this for all our worldly avocations, when we truly possess it:—it brightens them with a halo of purity. And so it makes a man a bet-

ter, a safer, a more patriotic politician. Entrust a country to dishonest hands in the guidance and prosecution of its government, it will soon altogether sink into corruption. The duty of each one of us is to show our gratitude by seeking to purify the political atmosphere. This we can do by frowning upon self-seeking, subterfuge, corruption in high places, and by giving our countenance to men of high tone, of firm integrity, of unselfish patriotism.

The true expression of gratitude for our educational privileges is labour and self denial for the greater efficiency of our Institutions of Learning.

The true expression of gratitude for religious privileges is faithfulness to these privileges. What to us is it that the Bible is an open Book in this land, if we read it not to our children and for our own edification, and if we honour it not in the family in the erection of an altar of worship? What to us is it that the throne of grace is accessible, if we fail to come to it freely, constantly, boldly, that so "we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need?" What to us is it that Churches abound, if we do not wait upon God in his ordinances? What to us is it that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is faithfully preached, if we do not heed each one for himself the blessed words of life? What to us is it that the Sacraments of the Church are faithfully ministered, if we bring not our children to the Baptismal font, and if we are not ourselves found at the Table of the Lord? What to us is it that God gives His Holy Spirit with the Word and the Sacraments, if we go on resisting, grieving, quenching this Divine light? Let us give a living expression to our thankfulness for the reli-

gious privileges that we enjoy ! Let us realize these “mercies of God” so great, so abundant; and let our gratitude live in our daily walk—in our words, tempers, acts,—our whole character—our LIFE !

Lastly, the true expression of gratitude for a bountiful harvest, is the relief of the poor who share not with us its blessings, but who are still left in want and misery. To spread a bountiful meal upon a widow’s bare table, to carry some luxury to the bed of the weak and sickly, or to the solitary room of the aged poor, to render by contribution to-day one of our many charitable institutions more effective in its holy work of blessing the poor with bread—these are true expressions of thankfulness for a bountiful harvest. This great national good, let me remind you, will react upon the success of every man’s business. Though you have not sown or planted, reaped or garnered, you will share these blessings of plenty. Your debts will be more easily collected, your sales and profits will be increased, the general confidence which this condition of things inspires will augment the value of your investments, and, if you are thankful as you ought to be, your gratitude will find some living expression without farther suggestion from me.

Brethren, the past has been a season of mercy ! Let us look still to the Source of all Good, and in Him let us humbly trust for the future. The signs of the times are portentous. War in the Western hemisphere has been succeeded by pestilence and murrain in the Eastern. Though we have had a year of peace, of plenty, and of health, let us accept

these blessings with reverence ; let us hold them as from God ; let us not be too exultant ; let not this fulness make us proud ; but, accepting the gifts of Providence with an humble mind, let us love and trust the bountiful Giver. In this spirit we shall be best prepared for whatever awaits us, whether as a people or as individuals.

And now let us go to our homes with joy, each one singing with melody in his heart,—

“ Bless the Lord, O my soul !

“ And all that is within me,

“ Bless His holy Name.

“ Bless the Lord, O my soul !

“ And forget not all His benefits.

“ Who forgiveth all thine iniquities,

“ Who healeth all thy diseases,

“ Who redeemeth thy life from destruction,

“ Who crowneth thee with loving kindress and
tender mercies,

“ Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things,

“ So that thy youth is renewed like the eagles !”



